

Damage

The best method for controlling black bear damage is prevention. Black bears have diverse food habits which are reflected in the different types of damage they cause, ranging from sweet corn damage to beehive destruction. Black bears can also create nuisance problems such as repeated scavenging in garbage cans, birdfeeders, dumps and campsites. Livestock including chickens, rabbits, sheep and goats are also subject to depredation by black bears.



Black bear damage usually occurs during the periods of greatest bear activity. These active periods are during the spring when food supplies are short and bears are dispersing, in the summer during mating season, and in the fall when bears are building up their fat reserves prior to denning.

Black Bears in New Jersey

Black bears are the largest land mammals in the Garden State. Adults are 5-6 feet long and stand 30-40 inches at the shoulder. Black bear tracks show five toes on both the front and hind paws. Tracks of the rear paw are about five inches wide and eight inches long. The usual color of eastern black bears is black with a brownish muzzle.

Bears are most active around dawn and dusk but are fairly active during the day. They are solitary animals except for females with cubs.

Black bears in New Jersey reach sexual maturity at approximately 2.5 to 3.5 years of age. During the breeding season in June and July, male bears travel extensively throughout their home range in search of females. At this time, they often pass through populated areas.

Pregnant females are typically dormant from November through March. Males are dormant for shorter periods, usually from late December through early March.

To learn more about black bears, visit our website at www.njfishandwildlife.com.

Black Bears

Damage and Nuisance Prevention



You can minimize your chances of negative encounters with black bears by following the steps in this brochure.



NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF
Fish and Wildlife

The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's mission is to protect and manage the State's nearly 800 fish and wildlife species to maximize their long-term biological, recreational and economic values for all New Jerseyans.

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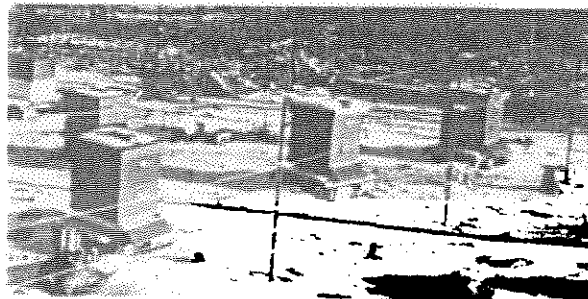
Wildlife Management Control Techniques

Electric fencing is the most effective and efficient method of preventing bear damage to beehives and livestock. Fencing may be erected in any location by using solar chargers.

Fence construction should be simple and as strong as possible. The following method of fencing is easy to erect and effective in most cases.

- Drive the corner posts. Remove grass and weeds in an 18" strip along the fenceline.
- Spray the cleared area with a herbicide to prevent the return of vegetation. Do not spray wider than 18" because the bear will be better grounded if it is standing on grass.
- Use four strands of polywire, barbed wire or electronet at 4", 16", 26" and 36" above the ground. Stretch the wires to eliminate sagging. Use stones or weights to keep the wires at the correct heights when going over low areas.
- Leave extra wire at the knot so it can be wrapped around the lower wire to complete the circuit.

- Use a minimum voltage output of 3000 volts. Verify this with a voltmeter. Energizers should be compatible with the type of wire used. Check the manufacturer's recommendations to be sure that all the requirements are met.
- Locate the fence posts 12-15' along the fenceline. Install the insulators and wire.
- Energize all wires in the fence system. The battery should be located inside the enclosure.
- Drive the ground rod 5-7 feet into moist soil.
- Bait the fence by tying bacon to the wires. When a bear grabs the bait it will get a shock to its tongue and mouth.



Maintenance

Fencing is only effective if it is maintained. Every time you visit the site check the following things:

- Make sure the wires are tight.
- Charge the batteries as needed.
- Drop loops in wires are beneficial.
- Use at least a 70 amp hour battery.
- Consult your supplier for the correct high output fence charger.
- Marine battery terminals and lead composition eyelets resist corrosion.

Fencing instructions are available from the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife. The Wildlife Services Unit also provides on-site assistance with fence construction techniques to anyone who is interested in installing electric fencing to prevent bear damage to beehives, agricultural crops and livestock. Anyone interested should contact the Wildlife Services Unit of the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife at (908) 735-8793.

Prevent problems before they can occur.

Nuisance Control Techniques

Proper solid waste management around homes and campsites is the most effective method of preventing black bear nuisance problems. All garbage should be stored in airtight containers in a secure area. Clean the containers once a week with a disinfectant solution. Pour ammonia into the bottom of the containers. Put garbage out the day of disposal, not the night before.

If you feed your pets outside, clean up all food scraps and immediately wash the bowl. Store pet food inside.

Birdfeeders should be hung only between December 1 and April 1, when bears are least active. Hang birdfeeders at least 10' high between two trees if you choose to leave them out during the summer. Bring the birdfeeders inside at night.

Clean grills. Grease and food scraps are potential bear attractors.

Black bears that are fed intentionally or unintentionally learn to associate food with people. These bears can become dangerous and may have to be destroyed. **Do not feed the bears!**